

Message Text

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64

ACTION SS-25

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R 141449Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2564
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 5844

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: AVAILABILY OF MATZOH

REF: (A) MOSCOW 5580, (B) STATE 86502,

1. WE HAVE CHECKED WITH A NUMBEROF SOURCES FROM AMONG BOTH OBSERVANT AND NON-OBSERVANT JEWS, AND THE MATZOH SITUATION ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER SEEMS TO BE AS FOLLOWS: AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, A SMALL QUANTITY OF MATZOH HAS BEEN BAKED LOCALLY AND DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE SYNAGOGUE, PRIMARILY TO THOSE OBSERVANT JEWS WHO REGULARLY ATTEND SERVICES. IN ADDITION, A SMALL AMOUNT OF MATZOH, SENT FROM SWITZERLAND, AND ADDRESSED TO THE SYNAGOGUE, WAS RECEIVED AND HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED PRINCIPALLY TO MEMBERS OF THE SAME GROUP.

2. A HANDFUL OF JEWISH FAMILIES HAVE RECEIVED PACKAGES OF MATZOH SENT TO THEM INDIVIDUALLY FROM ABROAD. WE KNOW OF THREE SUCH CASES, AND EACH FAMILY RECEIVED ITS PARCEL QUITE SOME TIME AGO. OUR SOURCES SAY THAT THEY ASSUME THAT THE POSTAL AND CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES LET THESE PARCELS THROUGH BEFORE A POLICY DECISION NOT TO ADMIT MATZOH HAD BEEN HANDED DOWN.

3. OUR SOURCES EXPECT THAT SHORTLY AFTER PASSOVER A LARGE NUMBER OF PACKAGES OF MATZOH, ADDRESSED TO INDIVIDUAL JEWS, WILL BE DELIVERED TO THEM. DELIVERIES COULD CONTINUE UNTIL AS LATE AS JUNE, IF PAST EXPERIENCE IS ANY GUIDE.

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4. RE SPECIFIC SHIPMENT MENTIONED STATE REFTEL, NEITHER WE NOR OUR SOURCES ARE SPECIFICALLY AWARE OF ANY "LARGE" SWISS SHIPMENT. IF THE SHIPMENT REFERRED TO REFTEL IS THE ONE DISTINED FOR THE SYNAGOGUE, THEN IT HAS BEEN DELIVERED. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, WHAT IS MEANT IS LARGE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL PACKAGES FROM SWITZERLAND, THEN NONE OF THESE, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, HAS BEEN DELIVERED.

5. OUR SOURCES UNANIMOUSLY STATE THAT THEY ARE ACCUSTOMED TO SUCH DIFFICULTIES EVERY YEAR. SOMEHOW, THOUGH, ALL MOSOCW JEWS WHO WANT TO GET MATZOH MANAGE TO ACQUIRE AT LEAST A SMALL QUANTITY. OUR SOURCES ADD THAT WHILE JEWS IN OTHER LARGE CITIES WITH BIG COMMUNITIES -- E.G., LENINGRAD, KIEV, AND ODESSA -- ARE PROBABLY NO LESS WELL SERVED THAN ARE MUSCOVITE JEWS, SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITIES LOCATED IN PROVINCIAL RUSSIAN CITIES QUITE OFTEN HAVE NO MATZOH AT ALL.
BREMENT

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